

# Dynamic Vs. Standard Assessment to Evaluate EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension

**Hooshang Khoshisma**

Associate Professor, Chabahar Maritime University  
khoshisma@cmu.ac.ir

**Mehri Izadi**

PhD Candidate, Chabahar Maritime University  
izadimi@yahoo.com

## Abstract

The present study chiefly aimed to compare two forms of dynamic assessment and standard assessment of EFL learners' listening comprehension. 59 Iranian EFL learners were randomly assigned to three test administration groups and assessed on listening for main and supporting information in listening tasks. In the first group, dynamic assessment in a form of scaffolding in which for any incorrect answer graded prompts were progressively presented to learners until they answered correctly was implemented. In the second group, dynamic assessment in a form of direct instruction of listening tasks was implemented. The third group was in a form of standard assessment; learners completed the task independently without mediation. The results revealed statistically significant listening improvement in favor of dynamic-supported and dynamic-instructed assessment groups rather than standard assessment one. The findings of the study indicate that dynamic assessment can gain better insights into learners' level of comprehension and their potential for future development and provide better learning effectiveness than those in statistic assessment group.

**Keywords:** Dynamic-Supported Assessment, Dynamic-Instructed Assessment, Standard Assessment, Listening Comprehension

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## **1. Introduction**

Within the latest theoretical framework, the conceptualization of learning as a socially- and culturally-depended phenomena namely Socio-Cultural Theory (SCT), to the best of our knowledge, is one of the promising learning theories. This conceptualization is attributed to Vygotsky (1978) who believed that individuals' cognition and learning are considered as social and cultural phenomena rather than an individual one. Learning, according to Vygotsky, is thus "successful tailoring of the interaction to the developmental level of individual learners" (cited in Ellis 2008, p. 528). Based on this perspective, learners employ physical, cultural and psychological means to regulate their mental activities in order to improve in their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to which Vygotsky refers as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Through interaction, ZPD brings about a cognitive development which shows a progression from sole achievement to an accomplishment by the help of competent peers (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001). Dynamic Assessment (DA) is, thus, a means which "is designed to bring out the learning potential and improve learning effectiveness by providing learners with a greater number of opportunities to interact with more competent peers and adults, such as teachers" (Wang, 2010, p.1158). It, further, has "the expressed goal of modifying learner performance during the assessment itself as opposed to obtaining a static measure of a learner's proficiency without feedback or intervention of any kind" (Ellis, 2008, p. 528). Therefore, DA can give a deeper view of learners' abilities, of what they can and cannot do while

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they are assisted. The development of learners' mental functions and, as a result, their learning potential can be grounded in DA.

From Vygotskian perspective, *Mediation* and *ZPD* are two key components of DA. Mediation denotes an intentional and reciprocal interaction between the examiner and the examinee in facing difficulties which entails developmental feedback by the examiner (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005). ZPD refers to what a student is capable to do at present and in future; "what the child is able to do with some collaboration or assistance today he will be able to do independently tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1934, p. 211). In this respect, mediation allows the examiner to cooperate with the examinee on an assessment task and aid him/her more thoroughly to move to the next level of his ZPD (Vygotsky, 1934). Therefore, through DA an individual can gradually reach his potential ability with the help of a skilled peer and his /her ability to accomplish more difficult tasks on account of several internalizations is progressively increased.

## **2. Theoretical Origin of DA**

DA roots in Vygotsky's colleague, Luria (1961), who compared static and dynamic assessments concerning Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of mind. According to Luria (ibid), statistical assessment, although grounded in sound psychometric principles, evaluates one's independent performance which does not represent a complete picture of his competence and underlined abilities. On the other hand, in light of DA's theoretical basis, instructor is required to consider two important points in order to have a full picture of an individual's capabilities. First, instructor should have sufficient evidence on one's performance when he is assisted by a competent

peer. Second, instructors should know to what extent the learner benefiting from the help is capable to complete the same tasks and transfer this mediated performance to other different tasks. Therefore, through intermental (social) level and in turn on the intramental (individual) level, learning potential happens and the learning effectiveness can be promoted (Vygotsky, 1978). In this respect, DA is an alternative to the traditional assessment approaches which only focus on one shot evaluation of learners' skills, e.g., IQ tests. DA has two main instructional features. It entails a reciprocal interaction by examiner and examinee in which examiner addresses examinee's learning difficulties either in the form of hints or instruction (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001). Noticing examinee's difficulties, examiner may modify the test, suggest a strategy or point out a clue. Examiner may also directly instruct examinees on their problem. These are two main DA formats: "individuals are provided with an opportunity to learn, and instruction and feedback are built into the testing process" (Wang, 2010, p. 1158). Sternberg and Grigorenko (2001) refer to them as *cake* and *sandwich* formats of DA.

The *cake* assessment, Train-Within-Test design, embeds the intervention in the assessment time in the form of feedbacks to learners' answer to each item. Shabani (2012, p. 323) argued that in the *cake* format dynamic assessment "mediation is usually very tightly scripted and often arranged as a menu of hints, prompts and cues that must be followed in a pre-determined sequence, from most implicit to most explicit" (p. 323). Receiving individualized feedback for each item, learners are provided with a graded series of hints for any incorrect answer. The prompts are in successive form, like layers of a cake, in order to help learners find the

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correct answer. These prompts are the actual instruction in and the main feature of the cake format which continue to the level that learners correctly answer each item. The intervention starts with general prompts to more specific ones. The general prompts address rather little specific information about the answer, while the specific prompts provide more detailed information about the solution (Wang, 2010).

The sandwich dynamic assessment, Test-Train-Test design, embeds the intervention between pre- and post-assessment, like a sandwich. Similar to the traditional experimental research designs, learners take a pre-test, following that, they are instructed and receive feedbacks individually or in group. After the intervention, learners will participate in post-assessment of the instruction (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001). As it is salient, the major difference between cake and sandwich format dynamic assessments is inclusion and exclusion of assessment and instruction in these two models, respectively. While instruction and assessment are combined in cake format, the two processes are separated in the sandwich model.

### **3. Related Studies**

DA has revealed promise in addressing a number of the concerns raised with traditional assessment. For example, a growing number of studies have shown that DA can assist to promote reading and writing skills (Abbott, Reed, Abbott & Berninger, 1997; Anton, 2009; Birjandi & Ebadi, 2012; Dorfler, Golke & Artelt, 2009; Kozulin & Garb, 2002; Shrestha & Coffin, 2012), speaking ability (Anton, 2009), syntactic knowledge (Hasson, Dodd & Botting, 2012), and CALL-related learning (Shabani, 2012; Wang, 2010), help learners with learning disabilities (Barrera, 2003; Elleman, Compton, Fuchs, Fuchs &

Bouton 2011; Pena, Gillam, Malek, Ruiz-Felter, Resendiz, Fiestas & Sabel 2006), and decrease affective filters (Barr & Samuels, 1988; Bethge, Carlson & Wiedl, 1982). In one study, Shrestha & Coffin (2012) delved into the dynamic tutor mediation, cake format, on academic writing development of learners. Two business learners received text-based interaction in line with DA approach mainly through emails. Between pre- and post-assessments of writing ability, learners were required to write about business-related issues and they received formative feedback in the form of text mediation on each assignment. Results of the study revealed that DA intervention assisted both teachers and learners to find and respond to the fields that they needed the most support. Wang (2010) compared the effectiveness of Web-based dynamic assessment system (GPAM-WATA) and normal Web-based test (N-WBT). The GPAM-WATA was a combination of cake format dynamic assessment and graduated prompt approach. The analysis of performances of 116 sixth grade elementary learners indicated that students with GPAM-WATA experiences had more effective e-learning compared to their counterparts. According to Wang, GPAM-WATA juxtaposed mediation and graded hints to permit learners to investigate or utilize some essential principles so that they could independently solve problems and accordingly learn more. This, in turn, creates “an assessment-centered e-learning environment that treats assessment as teaching and learning strategy” (Wang, 2010, p. 1165). From Microgenesis analytical framework, Birjandi & Ebadi (2012) explored EFL learners’ socio-cognitive development through cooperative dialogues by the help of synchronous computer mediated communication (SCMC) via Web2.0. Two female university students had one-to-one individual weekly DA on writing paragraphs. According to the findings, SCMC -based DA decreases the cognitive load of L2

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writing production and enhances writing flexibility, content creation and generation of new ideas.

In another DA implementation, Elleman et al. (2011) assessed the inference-making skills of children at risk of comprehension difficulties. The researchers individually assessed and instructed children on Word Identification (WID), Word Attack, and Passage Comprehension (PC) and provided them with feedback whenever children felt problems. The analysis of findings indicated that “the DA correlated significantly with a standardized measure of reading comprehension and explained a small but significant amount of unique variance in reading comprehension above and beyond vocabulary and word identification skills” (p. 348). In case of children with disabilities, the study concluded that DA is a better means of reading comprehension to find intra-individual differences compared to standardized testing. Further, Navarro and Mora (2011) argued that DA allows the examiner to optimize such learners’ learning process which leads to additional validity in relation to their evaluation. In a meta-analysis of studies on DA, Swanson and Lussier (2001) reported a high effect size for DA over standard assessment. According to their findings, DA classes showed better performance compared with standard assessment. Swanson and Lussier argued that DA provides more valid estimates of processing potential than traditional assessment. The test-retest model of DA, furthermore, assisted in distinguishing learners who had language learning difficulties in vocabulary and synonym learning (Gutierrez-Clellen, Brown, Conboy, & Robinson-Zanartu, 1998; Pena, Iglesias, & Lidz, 2001). In one study with Iranian EFL learners, Shabani (2012) probed the effectiveness of computerized dynamic assessment (C-DA) in improving learners’ reading skills. Applying cake formats and graduated prompt approach, the study provided learners with reading text along with its

manipulated version transformed by highlight and visual aids. The texts were presented to the learners in the form of computerized software. For any incorrect answer, the software automatically presented pre-fabricated mediatory hints. The results of the study revealed that C-DA scaffolding noteworthy improved learners' reading comprehension raised their awareness by addressing their attention to the key parts of the reading and aided them to comprehend the text better. More strikingly, C-DA significantly demonstrated learners' independent (ZAD) and assisted (ZPD) cognitive functioning.

With respect to the role of DA in listening comprehension, however, few studies can be referred to. The first study was conducted by Ableeva (2010) on the effects of listening DA on intermediate French learners. Following interactionist approach to DA, Ableeva adopted a pre-test/enrichment program/post-test design and assessed learners in DA, Transfer Session (TS) and Non-Dynamic Assessment (NDA) sessions. At the outset of each assessment session, learners were required to listen to the text twice, to try to understand it and then to recall it orally. As opposed to NDA group who completed the task independently without mediation, learners in DA and TS followed the same process but by the help of dialogic interactions. The analysis of findings revealed that the mediation gave rise to the establishment of the actual level of learners' listening ability, the diagnosis and assessment of the potential level of their listening development, and simultaneously the promotion of this development. In a similar study, Shabani (2014) followed interactionist group dynamic assessment (G-DA), and Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) concept. DA, TS and NDA learners were asked to provide the content of the heard segments or the meaning of selected words and phrases. While NDA group received no assistance during listening tasks, DA group and following in their TS learners engaged in one-to-one and one-to-



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group negotiations and dialogues. Findings delineated that “NDA procedure stops short of fully capturing the learners’ underlying potential and leaves aside the abilities which are in the state of ripening. It was shown that the learners’ ability to recognize an unrecognized word of the pretest transcended beyond the posttest task to the TR session, an improvement signaling their progressive trajectories toward higher levels of ZPD” (p. 1729). In a different study, Hidri (2014) divided the progress dynamic test, in DA group, to three testing phases: pre-testing which included wh-, guessing and matching items, while-testing which included two whs and summarizing items each, Multiple Choice (MC), true/false and guessing items, and finally post-testing which included MC, picture reordering, summarizing and making inference items. Each phase embedded mediation and meaning negotiation during response time to listening tasks. On the other hand, learners in standard assessment worked on Gap-filling, MC, information transfer, and true/false statements and followed instructions without experiencing any phases or mediation. The study found that DA phases provided better insights into examinees’ cognitive and meta-cognitive processes as opposed to static assessment.

It can be noted that DA is a means of assessing process of learning than the product of learning. Examiner, accordingly, can reach the best reflection of learning ability or potential for change by measuring the type of intervention that causes change in one’s ability, the extent of change that happens, and whether the skill learned can be transmitted to other areas. Given that, Dorfler et al. (2009) argued that the both dynamic assessment methods concentrate on the conditions under which performance can be changed rather than only on the performance itself. They bring into focus the interaction of the examiner and examinee, the effect of this interaction on performance, and the responsiveness of the examinee to the interaction. Given the small amount of

research on models of DA particularly in context of Iran as well as question over whether DA would affect learners' listening skill, the goal of current study was to compare two forms of DA and traditional assessment of Iranian EFL learners' listening for main and supporting information. The first model of DA was a form of scaffolding in which examiner provided learners with graded hints wherever examinees faced difficulties, namely dynamic-supported assessment group. The second model of DA was explicit instruction of listening task, namely dynamic-instructed assessment group. The non-dynamic group followed the traditional techniques, listened to the tasks and answered them independently. The study compared the possible learning potential of listeners across the three conditions. In light of the objectives of the study, the following questions were sought:

1. Do dynamic-supported and dynamic-instructed assessments have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension?
2. Is there any significant difference between listening performances of dynamic and non-dynamic assessment classes?

## **4. Method**

### **4.1. Subjects**

The subjects in this study were 59 Iranian EFL learners who were undergraduate males and females preparing for IELTS exam. The learners were between 23 and 28 years of age, with the mean of 25. Convenience sampling was used to select learners as they were those the researchers had access to. In order to be assured of subjects' homogeneity, tests of language proficiency and listening skill were administrated to learners prior to the study.

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**Table 1. ANOVA Test of Learners' Language Proficiency and Listening Skills**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Language Proficiency	Between Groups	8.238	2	4.119	.979	.402
	Within Groups	54.700	56	4.208		
	Total	62.938	58			
Listening Skill	Between Groups	3.267	2	1.633	.036	.965
	Within Groups	587.733	56	45.210		
	Total	591.000	58			

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test indicated that there is no significant difference between learners' English language proficiency ( $F=0.97$ ,  $p=0.40 \geq 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the analysis of listening test indicated that learners enjoyed similar levels of listening proficiency ( $F=0.03$ ,  $p=0.96 \geq 0.05$ ) (Table 1).

#### 4.2. Procedure

As a standard assessment means, IELTS exam evaluates testees' listening ability in a variety of social and academic contexts. The exam consists of four sections: 2 dialogues and 2 monologues. They particularly measure

- Listening for specific information
- Listening for main ideas and supporting information

In this study, the researchers narrowing down the scope of the study only assessed learners' listening ability in answering main ideas and supporting information in dynamic and non-dynamic assessment groups. After checking the language proficiency and listening homogeneity of learners, they were randomly assigned to one of the three test administration groups: dynamic-supported group ( $n=19$ ), dynamic-instructed group ( $n=19$ ), and standard group ( $n=21$ ). The listening materials and listening tasks in the three groups

were the same, but the methods used to assess learners were different. Learners in standard assessment were given the traditional listening teaching. Learners of dynamic-supported assessment were given listening tasks with help that made tasks easier if an error were made. Learners in dynamic-instructed assessment group were given instruction on how to find main and supporting information in listening tasks. The whole study took 8 weeks, two sessions per week.

*Standard assessment group.* Learners in this group were provided with listening tasks and were asked to listen to audios and answer the items carefully. The instructor only informed them of the correct and incorrect answers.

*Dynamic-supported assessment group.* Members of this group were similarly provided with listening tasks but they received support during their tasks. The mediation was elaborated on Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) collaborative frame, Sternberg and Grigorenko's (2001) idea of cake format dynamic assessment and Campione and Brown's (1985, 1987) Graduated Prompt Approach (GPA). The collaborative frame emphasizes that mediation should start with the most implicit contingent help to the most explicit one in a regulatory scale. Besides, GPA stresses that when the examinee fails to provide correct response to the questions, the examiner should mediate him through graded prompts on which examinee can discover or apply some principles to solve problems independently and learn more. For any listening exercise, if learners answered items correctly, they continued to the next exercise. If they answered incorrectly, the instructor provided them with supporting successive cues schematically displayed in Table 2 below. Learners followed these hints until they answered each item correctly.

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**Table 2. Regulatory Scale of Meditation from Implicit to Explicit**

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Prompt
1. Learners listened to the text again
2. Learners listened to a particular section of audio.
3. Stimulating questions were posed (e.g., what are the areas the lecturer deals with?).
4. Keywords or phrases along with their definitions or synonym were presented (e.g., recruit refers to a soldier who has recently enlisted in the army).
5. Part of listening was pronounced for learners.
6. Clarification of listening part was presented.

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*Dynamic-instructed assessment group.* Similar to the other two groups, members of this group were provided with the same listening tasks, however, they received instruction accompanied with a pamphlet on techniques and wayson how to find main and supporting information in listening tasks. The pamphlet was divided into six parts based on six different question types for finding main and supporting information in IELTS listening tasks: a) answering short questions, b) choosing a word from a list, c) answering multiple choice questions, d) completing a diagram, a chart or a grid, d) filling in gaps in a set of notes, and e) summary completion. Each section provided learners with techniques on how to face each question type, how to find main ideas in listening, and what supporting information learners should pay attention to. An example was provided below:

The IELTS may use summary completion to test your understanding of supporting details. The words in the summary will give a brief version of what you hear. Read the summary below. What is the main idea? Underline the words that tell you what details you need looking for.

**The Flagship of the Royal Fleet**

The *Mary Rose* sank in the year 1.....The king stood on the shore and watched her go down. The ship then lay on the sea bed for 2..... years. In 1982 she was 3..... and brought back to dry land. By analyzing the 4.....of the ship, scientists believe they are closer to learning why she sank.

After the instruction, learners worked on listening tasks and instructor asked and encouraged them to apply the instructed techniques in listening practices. Learners also received feedback both individually and in group in completing the tasks.

**4.3. Materials**

*Tests of Homogeneity*

To be assured of learners' homogeneity regarding language proficiency and listening ability, two tests were administrated. First, learners took a Nelson English Language Test (Fowler & Coe, 1976). The test contained fifty items: fourteen cloze test and thirty-six structure tests. Following that, the researchers administrated Interchange Objective Placement Test designed by Lesley, Hansen and Zukowski-Faust (2005) to check listening homogeneity of learners. The test includes 70 multiple-choice items which primarily evaluate learners' receptive skills (listening (20 items), reading (20 items), and grammar (30 items)). 20 items of listening were applied in this study. The listening items assess learners' ability to understand main idea, context, and supporting information in a conversation, as well as the speakers' intention.

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#### *Listening Tasks*

All groups worked on *A Collection of 95 IELTS Listening Practice Tests* as the material of listening practices. The book consisted of 95 IELTS listening exercises published by PardisDanesh Cultural Institute. For the purpose of this study, only exercises that required learners to listen and find answer to the main and supporting information were indicated and worked with learners. The range of question types assessed learners on this skill are

- answering short questions
- choosing a word from a list
- answering multiple choice questions
- completing a diagram, a chart or a grid
- filling in gaps in a set of notes
- summary completion

An example of short question type taken from *A Collection of 95 IELTS Listening Practice Tests* page 205 was provided below.

#### **EXAMPLE: Listen and answer**

##### **Spiders**

What is the subject of the man's talk?

#### *Listening Comprehension Test*

To have evidence on the possible effect of the implemented interventions, the listening section of IELTS Test was employed as pre- and post-tests. The test was taken from Cambridge Practice Tests for IELTS series (Jakeman & McDowell, 1996), which were published by Cambridge University. This test was employed as the main measure of listening assessment in so far as IELTS exam is a validated means of evaluating learners' language ability implemented worldwide. For the purpose of this study, the question items which evaluated

listeners' skill on finding main ideas and supporting information were indicated and prepared, the test was once administrated as pre-test (before the intervention) and once more as post-test (after the intervention). The test consisted of forty one listening questions required to be answered in 30 minutes. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  of the test was calculated as .72.

## 5. Results and Discussion

To answer the first research question, the descriptive statistics of pre- and post-assessments of three groups were calculated and presented in Table 3. According to the mean scores of the pre-tests, learners showed similar listening abilities ( $M_{DS}=22.66$ ,  $M_{DI}=21.21$ , and  $M_{SA}=21.95$ ). To be assured of the insignificance of differences, ANOVA test was run checking the mean differences of pre-tests of dynamic (supported and instructed) and non-dynamic groups (Table 3).

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Dynamic-Supported, Dynamic-Instructed and Standard Assessment Groups**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	DSPre	22.6653	19	6.51563	1.49479
	DSPost	29.8421	19	3.91951	.89920
Pair 2	DIPre	21.2105	19	5.81740	1.33460
	DIPost	28.2105	19	6.19658	1.42159
Pair 3	SAPre	21.9524	21	6.24881	1.36360
	SAPost	23.2857	21	4.90044	1.06936

As Table 4 indicates, there are no significant differences ( $F=0.26$ ,  $Sig.=0.77 \geq 0.05$ ) between dynamic and non-dynamic learners in their listening comprehension prior to the study. This denotes that learners enjoy similar listening ability before they underwent intervention.



**Table 4. ANOVA test of dynamic and non-dynamic pre-tests**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
AllGPreT	Between Groups	20.107	2	10.054	.261	.771
	Within Groups	2154.271	56	38.469		
	Total	2174.378	58			

Table 4 delineates that any (possible) significant changes in the post-tests could be the result of the intervention. Table 3 also shows the post-test performances of the three groups on finding the main ideas in listening test. There are noteworthy differences between dynamic and non-dynamic assessment groups ( $M_{DS}=29.84$ ,  $M_{DI}=28.21$ , and  $M_{SA}=23.28$ ). The significance of differences were further analyzed, however, even with insignificant differences, it can be noticed that supported- and instructed-dynamic assessment learners performed differently in their post-tests compared to standard ones and that should be paid close attention to. The differences suggest that dynamic procedures and the inclusion of mediated interaction during the assessment provide more information concerning learner's knowledge and abilities. DA is an effective means of understanding learners' capabilities in order to assist them to overcome linguistic problems. The interaction between the examiner and examinee reveals the type of help the learner needs in order to complete the test and indicates the underlying problems in the learner's development. Similar to these findings, Shabani (2012) revealed the same mean differences demonstrating that more than 80% of dynamic learners passed their reading test while near to 70% of non-dynamic learners failed the same test. Shabani argued that the mediation and assessment grounded in DA validate learners' promotion from actual to potential change. According to Ableeva (2010), an independent performance would demonstrate a *zigzagged* pattern of a series of progression and

regression which corroborate Vygotsky's argument regarding the conflicting nature of development. On the other hand, the mediation offered to learners may not reveal a uniform microgenetic development, but it is idiosyncratic. Shabani (2014) refers to these differences as inherent superiority of DA to static evaluation as this situated intermental and in turn intramental opportunity to learn and receive feedback can establish a more complete picture of one's underlying abilities.

The possibility of improvement and significance of differences in listeners' skills were analyzed through paired sample *t*-test (Table 5). According to Table 5, dynamic-supported (*Sig.*=0.00), and dynamic-instructed assessments (*Sig.*=0.00) significantly promoted listener's ability in finding the main idea and supporting information in listening tasks. The findings of the study revealed that, through interaction in the ZPD, mediation in the two forms of dynamic-supported and dynamic-instructed assessments constitutes not only the actual level of learners' listening ability but also diagnoses and assesses the potential level of their listening development. The mediations permit to find out how a learner approaches specific types of problems and where in the process of solving these problems difficulties arise. This information about learner's capabilities is more profound than what is normally obtained in traditional assessment. The results can be explained with reference to Ableeva (2010), Hidri (2014), Pena et al. (2006) and Shrestha and Coffin (2012). Hidri (2014) asserts that assessing listening dynamically engages learners in joint activities to overcome the difficulty of task as well as "to reach the stage where they can construct meaning in an autonomous way" (p. 13). According to Shrestha and Coffin (2012), DA attends to learning and development and assists to detect examinees' evolving abilities which are different from their actual abilities, in this study learning to manage information flow in the

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listening more effectively. As the findings of this study delineate, graduated prompts along with instruction and feedback move examinees a step further in the process of listening comprehension and facilitate more accurate diagnosis of main and supporting information during the tasks.

**Table 5. Paired Differences in pre- and Post-test Administrations**

	Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 1 DSPre - DSPost	-7.17684	6.73059	1.54410	-4.648	18	.000
Pair 2 DIPre - DIPost	-7.00000	2.51661	.57735	-12.124	18	.000
Pair 3 SAPre - SAPost	-1.33333	3.49762	.76324	-1.747	20	.046

Table 5 also reveals that even standard assessment learners without any mediation scored significantly better in their post-assessment. It was expected that learners' listening ability would improve due to sixteen sessions of listening practices. However, the study further pursued whether these significant improvements showed any outperformances between the three groups. To have more evidence on the effect of implemented interventions, ANOVA and Post Hoch tests were conducted. As Table 6 reveals, there are significant differences between the performances of dynamic-supported, dynamic-instructed, and standard assessment groups ( $F=9.10$ ,  $Sig.=0.00 \leq 0.05$ ). It can be implied that in spite of observed improvements, some groups outperformed the others.

**Table 6. ANOVA Test of Dynamic and Non-dynamic Post-tests**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
AllGPostT	Between Groups	471.013	2	235.507	9.108	.000
	Within Groups	1447.970	56	25.857		
	Total	1918.983	58			

The results of Post Hoc Test demonstrated that both dynamic-supported (group 1) and dynamic-instructed (group 2) classes performed better as compared with standard assessment class (group 3) (see Table 7). It is a progression from actual to potential change that learners in dynamic-supported and dynamic-instructed assessment conditions reached. The statistical assessment group ( $Sig.=0.00$  and  $Sig.=0.00$ ), however, didn't reveal the same significant improvement compared to dynamic learners. This was possible because DA through interaction in the ZPD helps to bring to surface those capabilities that have already matured, those that are maturing and those that are yet to mature at the same time. Once these abilities are exposed, then it is time to improve them in a maximally effective way. However, in a statistic assessment only abilities that have already matured are uncovered and the abilities that need maturation are missed.

Differences denote that dynamic learning significantly trapped the effect of social mediated learning that reduced the cognitive demand of comprehension in listening tasks. This was further proved by finding no significant difference under dynamic-supported and dynamic-instructed conditions on post-assessments ( $Sig.=0.95$ ). The results can be explained with reference to Anton (2009), Elleman et al. (2011), Poehner and Lantolf (2005), Sternberg and Grigorenko (2001), and Wang (2010). According to Elleman et al. (2011), when learners face difficulties, graded series of hints and feedbacks permit them overcome difficulties by continuously presenting more specific prompts. Wang (2010) highlighted that this "graduated way of providing hints can progressively guide examinees to discover or apply some principles to solve problems independently and thus learn more" (p. 1163). Moreover, Anton (2009) stated that the more strategies and feedback learners receive, the more effective learning they have.

**Table 7. Post Hoc of Post-tests**

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
All GPostT	1.00	2.00	1.63158	1.64977	.587	-2.3404	5.6035
		3.00	6.55639*	1.61001	.000	2.6802	10.4326
	2.00	1.00	-1.63158	1.64977	.587	-5.6035	2.3404
		3.00	4.92481*	1.61001	.009	1.0486	8.8010
	3.00	1.00	-6.55639*	1.61001	.000	-10.4326	-2.6802
		2.00	-4.92481*	1.61001	.009	-8.8010	-1.0486

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

In addition, the results of the Post Hoc test demonstrated that learners with dynamic-instructed intervention had significantly better leaning effectiveness than those without any dynamic intervention. This finding can be explained with reference to Barrera (2003) Birjandi and Ebadi (2012) and Dorfler et al. (2009). Birjandi and Ebadi suggested that instruction on how better examinee can handle learning tasks help them at least to know what to do during the tasks. The feedbacks, as a result, increase learners' consciousness by directing their attention to the key information in listening and help them to comprehend it better. In this study, learners' instruction on techniques to find the main and supporting information significantly promoted their internalization.

## 6. Conclusion

The prime concern of this study was to compare two forms of DA and traditional assessment of Iranian EFL learners the study specifically explored the effect of dynamic-supported and dynamic-instructed assessments on

learners' level of comprehension of listening tasks, particularly main ideas and supporting information items. It was empirically confirmed that DA learners experiencing graduated prompt and instruction yielded higher levels of comprehension on the listening tasks than obtained under the NDA, static testing condition. Based on the findings, the effectiveness of support and instruction provided in DA models is promised. The successive hints and feedbacks presented by teacher are effective in facilitating learning when applied to develop listening comprehension. The graded prompt and support direct learners to handle more effectively listening tasks and indicate their evolving listening abilities. By the same token, instruction and feedback in dynamic-instructed assessment progressively assist learners with varying ZPDs. This is in form of some collaboration or assistance to help learners move from their present abilities to a developmental level originally aiming at aiding them to better understand listening tasks and more effectively plan their learning. It can be concluded that DA models allow teachers: (i) have a more accurate picture of learners' cognitive potential, (ii) indicate elements that cause difficulty for learners during learning, and (iii) identify and provide interventions that assist learners reach a level of accomplishment uncovering their latent abilities. Nevertheless, since this research is a small scale study that only investigated the effect of dynamic-supported, dynamic-instructed and standard assessments on fifty nine Iranian EFL learners and centered mainly on learning to find main and supporting information in listening tasks, the findings may not be generalizable to other samples and for mastering other skills and subjects. It is suggested that future studies explore the effectiveness of DA models on a larger sample with more variables. The amount of time each learner spends when s/he receives a prompt and continues to the next

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prompt and the number of prompts that the learner needs to answer correctly can be the subjects of further analysis of DA impacts.

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